South River Watershed Restoration
Environmental Assessment
South River Field Office
EA # OR-105-00-05

Date Prepared: June 21, 2002

East Fork Stouts Creek
Culvert Replacement
Decision Documentation

Decision:

It is my decision to authorize the replacement of a large stream-crossing culvert on the E. Fork Stouts Creek, located on BLM Road No. 31-3-10.1, immediately upstream of the junction with Road No. 31-3-3.2. The road and stream crossing are located within a right-of-way across Roseburg Resources Company lands in T. 31 S., R. 3 W., NW¼NE¼, Section 22, W.M. Field Office and District engineering personnel have identified a need for replacement of the culvert because of the near-term risk of failure. Fishery biologists have also identified the culvert as a barrier to upstream and downstream passage by resident fish and other aquatic organisms.

Culvert design and installation will incorporate Best Management Practices from Appendix D (p. 134-136) of the *Roseburg District Record of Decision/Resource Management Plan* (ROD/RMP June 1995). Among the project design features to be implemented:

- Replacement of the existing culvert with an open-arched pipe sized to greater than bankfull width. The arched pipe will allow accumulation of streambed substrates (spawning gravels) and reduce stream flow velocities that could otherwise result in channel downcutting and stream bank erosion, and impede upstream and downstream passage by juvenile resident fish and other aquatic fauna.
- Design of the culvert to pass a theoretical 100-year flood event.
- Restriction of in-stream construction activities to the period between July 1 and September 15, consistent with Best Management Practices contained in the Roseburg District ROD/RMP.
- Diversion of stream flow during construction activities, and minimization of in-stream equipment operation.
- Prior to commencement of work, placement of absorbent booms downstream of the project site to contain potential spillage of any petroleum products.
- Any resulting waste material will be endhauled to an authorized upland disposal site.
- Revegetation of disturbed areas and stream banks with native grasses and/or trees.
- Pressure washing or steam cleaning of excavation and earth-moving equipment prior to move-in on the project site in order to minimize the risk of introducing soil from outside the project area that may be contaminated with noxious weed seed.

Rationale for the Decision:

The replacement of the culvert would not result in any undue environmental degradation. Replacement would provide safe access for land management, and would restore access by resident fish upstream and downstream of the site. The project is consistent with objectives of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy contained in the ROD/RMP (pp. 20-21), specifically the maintenance and restoration of the natural sediment regime; maintenance and restoration of in-stream flows; maintenance and restoration of spatial and temporal connectivity in the watershed; and maintenance and restoration of habitat.

The action would also meet the objective stated in Appendix D, Best Management Practices "To preclude stream crossings from being a direct source of sediment to streams thus minimizing water quality degradation and provide unobstructed movement for aquatic fauna."(ROD/RMP, p. 134). This project was included and analyzed in Alternative 1, the proposed action, of the EA. Its implementation would meet the stated objectives of the alternative. The alternative of "no action," Alternative 2, would not meet the identified objective or need.

Because the project site is located on private lands there are no provisions or requirements for pre-disturbance surveys for Survey and Manage species.

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service has identified an array of soil series within a set of geographic quadrangles that represent potentially suitable habitat for Kincaid's lupine *(Lupinus sulphureus var. kincaidii),* a Federally-threatened species. The project area is within the identified geographic range, but the requisite soil types are absent. As a consequence, the site is not considered to be suitable habitat, the species is not expected to be present and surveys are not required.

The project area is not located within ¼ of a mile of any activity centers for the northern spotted owl. In-stream work is prohibited prior to July 1, so that the potential for disturbance to nesting owls, associated with construction activities and noise, is not present. There is no habitat at the site of the culvert, so the potential for affecting owls by modifying or removing habitat does not exist. As a consequence, this project is considered to have no effect on the northern spotted owl.

Lower reaches of the East Fork of Stouts Creek provide spawning and rearing habitat for the Federally-threatened Oregon Coast coho salmon and the Candidate Oregon Coast steelhead trout. The anadromous reach extends to within approximately ½-mile of the culvert site. The potential or actual effects of culvert replacement on Oregon Coast coho salmon and designated critical habitat are primarily derived from sediment generated by stream bank disturbance and instream activities associated with the culvert replacement. These effects were determined to be likely to adversely affect listed fish and designated critical habitat, and were consulted with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Project effects on Essential Fish Habitat are considered substantively the same. The NMFS findings are addressed in the August 8, 2001, Programmatic Biological and Conference Opinion for Programmatic Activities Affecting SONC Coho Salmon, OC Coho Salmon, and OC Steelhead. This project is consistent with the terms and conditions set forth in the opinion in conjunction with authorization of Incidental Take.

The EA and Finding of No Significant Impact were made available for public review from June 28, 2000, through July 28, 2000. Comments were received from one organization which did not constitute new information, nor were any issues identified which were not already considered and addressed in the South River Watershed Restoration EA, the ROD/RMP, or the Roseburg District *Proposed Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement.*

Compliance and Monitoring:

Monitoring will be done in accordance with implementation monitoring objectives and requirements for Water and Soils, and Fish Habitat resources contained in the ROD/RMP, Appendix I (pp. 189 and 195-198).

Protest and Appeals Procedures:

As outlined in 43 CFR § 5003 Administrative Remedies, protests may be filed with the authorized officer within 15 days of the publication date of the Decision Notice in the Roseburg, Oregon, *News-Review.*

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E. Dwight Fielder Date
Field Manager
South River Field Office